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September 23, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT

Secretary Kissinger has asked that I pass the following report to you.

"My September 22 stay in Kinshasa was both a useful and pleasant interlude. Mobutu and I talked for almost four hours in his office and then aboard his river steamer.

"I went through the current state of play of our Southern African initiatives, which Mobutu fully supported both privately in his conversations with me and then in a press conference for the international and Zairian press. He made no bones about his profound suspicion of Nyerere's motives, and told me in detail how the latter had broken agreements with him and Kaunda regarding Southern Africa's liberation movements. In each case, it was the African radicals and the Soviets that benefited from this behavior, he said.

"The key problem facing moderate African leaders now is to generate sufficient momentum in support of the peaceful solution which our efforts have made possible, to head off the attacks of the radicals -- egged on by the Soviets -- that will surely come. Mobutu saw this clearly within minutes of the opening of our conversation, and suggested that we outflank Nyerere by building support elsewhere in the Continent. At his recommendation, I am sending Assistant Secretary Schaufele to Mauritius to brief the acting OAU President, so that he will be able to do some missionary work with his OAU colleagues. I am also sending Assistant Secretary Reinhardt, our former Ambassador to Nigeria, to brief the Nigerians and generate support from our friends in the Ivory Coast and Senegal. Mobutu will see the frontline presidents next week, and assures me he will encourage Kaunda and Khama of Botswana to support what we have done.

"Mobutu urged me to give Kaunda our strong support during this critical period, since he can be such a useful counterweight to Nyerere. It was a wise suggestion. Zambia is in critical need of wheat, so I have instructed State and AID to rapidly process 16,000 tons of PL-480 wheat for early delivery to Kaunda.

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"Mobutu also made a persuasive case for building a strong block of moderate states in central and southern Africa that would break the radical Angola-Mozambique axis and isolate Tanzania. Such a moderate tier is impossible unless we can get moderate governments in Rhodesia and Namibia, so we will have to consider urgently -- if our Southern African initiatives produce the results we hope for -- how we can increase the degree of American support both political and financial, to these new states, and in turn to the region at large.

"Mobutu appreciates what the British have not yet learned: the purpose of our policy is not to end white rule in Rhodesia and Namibia, but to create stable regimes capable of resisting Soviet pressure. The USSR also seems to have figured this out, given the increasing amount of invective coming from the Soviet press and diplomatic establishment. We can clearly expect that the Russians will now step up their support to the radical factions throughout Southern Africa.

"I reviewed with Mobutu our military assistance plans for Zaire. Given the fact that Soviet arms continue to flow into Angola, he was clearly unhappy at our inability to assist our friends more rapidly and completely. Our present assistance calls for deliveries too late in the life of the five-year program; given the all too recent experience of Angola and our interest in bolstering our moderate friends, I intend to see what can be done to get a higher delivery priority for Zaire. In all probability, I shall soon recommend that you call a National Security Council meeting to review the matter.

"Mobutu asked that I send you his personal hopes for your reelection. I thanked him and said that you would be glad to receive him in the US at a mutually convenient time. He was pleased and indicated that next spring might be a possible time."

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